

# *Impact of population related policies on selected living arrangements*

## *Comparative analyses on regional level in Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland*

B. Fux and A.D. Baumgartner

Sociological Institute of the University of Zurich, Rämistrasse 69, CH-8001 Zurich  
Research Associates, Tel.: +41 1 634 21 64 or +41 1 261 29 93 Fax +41 1 634 29 08  
e-mail: fux@soziologie.unizh.ch; ad.baumgartner@swissonline.ch

### **Summary:**

The paper focuses on interdependencies between the spread and current distribution of selected living arrangements (singles, childless couples, lone-parent families, and larger households) and population related policies on regional level (provinces, cantons). The analyses are concentrated on Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland which are internally highly segmented (e.g. religious denominations, languages, urbanisation, and economic structures). These countries also represent different family policy regimes. After presenting an approach for studying the impact of family policies and introducing into the trajectories of changing household structures since 1950, we report major results of multivariate analyses which are supporting the hypothesis that family policies are encouraging or discouraging the selection of living arrangements.

## 1. Introduction:

In the course of the past decades, the traditional family has undergone important transformations. The fertility decline, increasing divorce rates, and female labour force participation were predominant subjects of scientific research. During this period new family forms entered into competition with the bourgeois type of family (Parsons' „normal" family) and its predetermined division of labour between gender (breadwinner model). The dissemination of new living-arrangements like unmarried cohabitation, lone-parenthood, childlessness or living apart together, and the legitimacy of these modern family types vary significantly from country to country and even within countries.

In the face of these changes, increasing priority was given to questions like: What is, could be, and should be the role of the state in the field of family related policies? Do different forms of support have impacts on the occurrence of certain living-arrangements? Which are the mechanisms of potential impacts? Although such queries led to many scientific studies on family policy matters, only limited progress in this field can be registered. In particular, hardly any direct causal effects of particular benefits and provisions for families could be detected or even quantified.

At least three reasons caused the limited knowledge on these topics. (i) Family policy refers to an *over-complex system* of interdependencies in which three subsystems: namely individuals, families, and the state are involved in multiple ways (Kaufmann/Herlth 1982). This leads to *methodological problems* that cannot easily be solved in an appropriate way. We would like to mention just few challenging issues: (a) The lack in *strictly comparative information* on family related policies. Difficulties are also related to the fact that beside universal benefits there exist also means-tested, tax-related, as well as private (occupational) benefits only for specific sub-groups. The analysis of potential effects therefore has to distinguish between different types of re-

ipients as well as between different living-arrangements because the impact might even be reverse. (b) Missing *longitudinal individual-level data* intensify the micro-macro-problem. Comparative large-scale Surveys like the FFS certainly improve this situation. (ii) Furthermore, *concise theorising is lacking*. There exist macro-analytical approaches comparing the effects of family policy expenditures on the distribution of selected family-forms or demographic indicators (TFR, births out-of-wedlock, labour force participation, etc.; cf. Ekert 1986; Blanchet/Ekert 1988; Huber/Stephens 1992; Gauthier 1991, 1993). But they often neglect the interests and intentions of individual actors or specific sub-groups of the population. Secondly, there are economic theories (New Home Economics, rational-choice), which mostly focus on the concept of the costs of children (Becker 1981; Friedman, Hechter and Kanazawa 1994). Even if arguing from a micro-analytical perspective, they often tend to overemphasise the dimension of economic rationality, dealing with children as if they were just consumers' goods. A third group of theories, like Caldwell's wealth-flows theory (Caldwell 1982), Esping-Andersen's comparative study: „The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism” (Esping-Andersen 1990), micro-simulations carried out by Kaufmann and his collaborators (Kaufmann et al. 1988, 1992), or generalised rational-choice approaches (Cliquet 1992; de Bruijn 1992, 1993; Fux, 1994) made attempts to catch up on these arrears. However, some of these proposals are not explicitly devoted to family policy, but to welfare policies in a much broader sense. (iii) Beside the above-mentioned difficulties, comparative study on potential effects of family policies should take into account the *peculiarities of countries* concerning the trajectories and the present state of their economy, their cultural tradition, as well as their family policy system.

On this background, one can expect from this paper only preliminary answers to the question whether particular models, and which models of the family, are en- or dis-

couraged by different family policies? The objective of our contribution is twofold: First, we propose an impact model which stresses on interdependencies between economic preconditions, societal cleavages, demographic prerequisites, and family related policies on the one hand, and the spread and occurrence of selected living-arrangements on the other. Secondly, by concentrating on three smaller, but highly segmented countries, namely Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland, we intend to test selected hypotheses. Data are borrowed from various population censuses as well as from national Family and Fertility Surveys (FFS).<sup>1</sup>

In the following section, we discuss two different impact models and draft the particularities of our approach. In section three, hypotheses will be formulated. In the subsequent section, we briefly discuss major findings of multivariate regression and the biplot technique. The paper will end with conclusions related to the assumed impact of family policies.

## **2. An approach to analyse the impact of family policies on living-forms:**

We distinguish two different types of welfare or family policy impact models. The *causal interpretation* assumes that a government is implementing a certain policy in order to directly influence the behaviour of families and/or individuals. Human behaviour is considered as determined by external factors, mainly the interests of governmental actors to promote, prevent, or regulate a certain outcome. This type of explanation has some important shortcomings: (i) Countries frequently do not formulate explicit policies relating to the family and living arrangements; (ii) It has been argued that governmental action produces often rather “unintended consequences” than causal effects; (iii) Causal models mostly do not allow to describe individual-level mechanisms leading to a certain outcome. (iv) Since causal models are based on well-defined relations be-

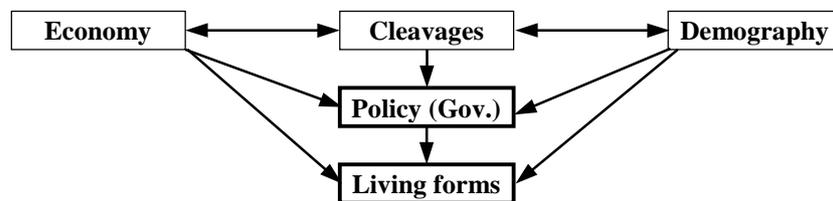
tween actors and behavioural outcome (e.g: couples -> reproductive behaviour). But differential effects for certain time-periods or for some sub-groups, as well as indirect effects seem often to be neglected. In reviewing this type of literature, one can say that most authors mention severe doubts whether welfare or family policies do have a direct quantitative long-term impact on individual behaviour (Höhn/Schubnell 1986: 3)

A second type of impact model – we call it *dynamic interdependencies* – considers human behaviour as *in-deterministic*. Similar to rational choice approaches, personal interests, preferences, and intentions cannot be explained nor predicted in a strict sense. The government as well as families and individuals are held as institutions, embedded in a network of interdependent relations. Both actors evaluate societal processes and refer on each others' demands. In this view, welfare and family policies are much more the result of a complex trade-off (conflict management) between subsystems, which takes into account external factors (e.g. the economy, cleavages, traditions) as well as the outcome of previous activities (evaluations). In this perspective, the government is functioning as an institution, moderating between different structures and actors. Since the model supposes a “discourse” or “dialogue” between different actors, one should avoid a terminology suggesting causal effects. We therefore prefer to speak about interdependencies that are encouraging or discouraging a certain behavioural outcome. A methodological limitation of the model of dynamic interdependencies lies in its complexity that makes it difficult to operationalise particular impact mechanisms.

In view of these difficulties, we refer to *rational choice theory*, which is at present the dominant approach in models of decision-making. It can be linked with selected aspects deriving from the second type of impact models. The general idea is quite simple. Both, the government as well as families and individuals, are considered as rational actors. A government is providing different forms (legal, economical, and ecological) of

interventions (Kaufmann 1982) addressed to various family types on the background of a country's economy, its historically grown cleavage structures, and its demographic preconditions. By means of political strategies, the government generally intends either to reduce restrictions, barriers and thresholds families are confronted with, or to stimulate certain outcomes. Whether a government puts an observable restriction on its political agenda and which policies it provides depends not least on external factors. In the following, we lay stress on the economic capacities, the configuration of cleavage structures, and demographic preconditions.

**Figure 1: Hypothetical Impact Model:**



Also individuals and couples are to be characterised as rational actors. According to neo-classic economic theories, the individual is defined as a utility maximizer. It “displays a kind of behaviour directed by deliberate and calculating evaluations of alternatives, and the subsequent choice is the best course of action to achieve a clearly defined end“ (de Bruijn 1992: 5). Sociologists designed a much broader concept of rationality (“rationality from the point of view of the actor“, cf. Coleman 1990: 18) by providing some contextual body and stressing the procedures of decision making. In this sense, rationality refers to free choice within the limits of the one's capacities and the social environment of an individual or a couple. Again, we assume that the economy, the structure of societal cleavages, and demographic traditions are the most prominent contextual factors which form the boundary of individual choice. Figure 1 is illustrating this general impact model.

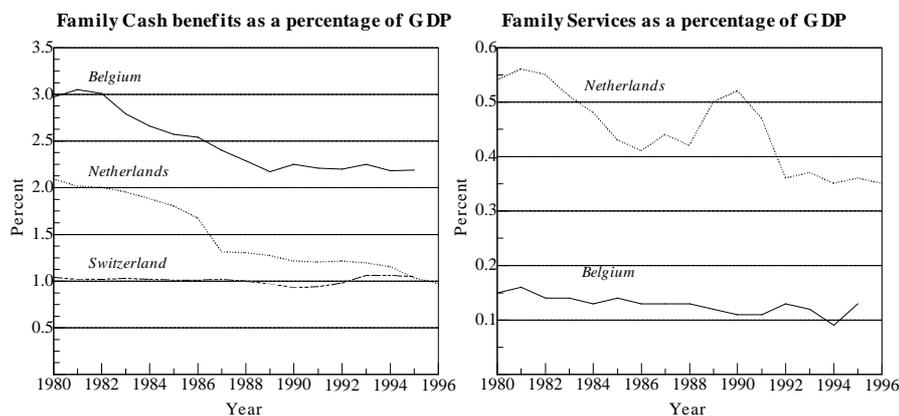
In order to further elaborate this approach, one has to refer briefly on the evolution

of European welfare-states, since family policy is an essential part of it. In the course of its development and in line with the process of modernisation, more and more risks of market and everyday life (e.g. illness, old-age, unemployment, and poverty) had been covered by social security institutions. Nevertheless, regarding the trajectories of welfare-state evolution in the European countries, there still exist significant differences. Various typologies had been developed in order to describe rather than to explain inter-country variations in this respect. Typologies vary from mere geographic divisions, over such who organise Europe in countries following either the Bismarckian or the Beveridgian model (Bonoli 1997) to more theoretically founded typologies like those proposed by Therborn (1985), Korpi and Palme 1998, or Esping-Andersen (1990) who was inspired by Titmuss' (1974) ideas. As concerning the three countries under observation, one can state, that these represent according to most of these typologies rather clearly distinct regime-types. In Esping-Andersen's terminology, represents Belgium the *conservative* model, while the Netherlands belongs to the *social-democratic* regime type, and Switzerland is performing the *liberal* model.

The family policy systems of these three regime-types can ideal-typically be characterised as follows: Countries with a *social-democratic* regime prefer ecological interventions (e.g. services), a fact which might be explained by their doctrine to support emancipation interests of women. In these countries, the amount of family allowances is markedly higher, but with a smaller progression of benefits in relation to children's parity. The duration of maternity leave schemes is longer, and they prefer a parental leave rather than a child-care leave to which only women are entitled to. Since these measures are expensive, they require higher taxes from their citizens. Countries representing the *conservative* type show many similarities with countries of the first group. Nevertheless, they differ with regard to the following aspects. The objective of their family policy is

centred on providing monetary transfers between married couples (breadwinner-model) on the one hand, and individuals or non-marital living-arrangements on the other. To support emancipation interests are of minor importance. These countries prefer economic interventions, e.g. high family allowances that are linked with children's parity. Overall expenditure of this type of family policy is lower in comparison with the social-democratic regime-type, but markedly higher than the expenditure in so-called liberal countries. The peculiarities of the *liberal* regime type are to be described in negative terms rather than in clearly structured preferences. Characteristics are a short duration of maternity leave, mostly linked with the absence of payment guarantees, and low tax rates, because social security expenditures as well as the maternity and family expenditures are much lower. By contrast, the average income of individuals is often comparatively higher. Figure 2 gives evidence for Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland in terms of the overall Family cash benefits and the expenditure for family services (source: OECD social expenditure data-base). Cash benefits are highest in Belgium, and the Netherlands is comparatively more generous with regard to services addressed to the families. Switzerland ranks on both dimensions lowest (services are marginal and therefore not documented in the figure). The figures also show the dismantling of family policies, particularly in Belgium and the Netherlands, during the 1980s.

**Figure 2: Differences in Family policy expenditure, B, NL, and CH**



### **3. Hypotheses and description of basic developments:**

First, it is not self-explanatory why we focus on three smaller Western European countries, namely Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland. The selection of these countries depends first on the interest to study the relevance of structural and cultural variations with regard to household and family structures. All of these countries are characterised by a strong internal segmentation (cleavages) as concerning the distributions of religious denominations, languages, the degree of urbanisation and finally the structure of the economic sectors. Secondly: each of these countries is representing a particular welfare and family policy regime type. Regional level analyses (provinces in B and NL, cantons in CH) invite therefore to mutually control for cleavage-effects and welfare policy impacts on family related behaviour.

Analyses are concentrated mainly on four living arrangements, namely singles, childless couples, mono-parental families, and households with 5 and more persons. In the following, we briefly document on relevant inter-country heterogeneity in the post-war development of these household types and formulate hypotheses regarding the impact of demography, economy, and family policy on these trajectories. It is worth while to mention that regarding the proportions of singles, larger households, and lone-parent families, the heterogeneity between provinces is as large as the variation among Western European countries (more detailed, Fux 1999, forthcoming).

#### *Single person households:*

Beside unmarried cohabitation and dual-career families, premarital singlehood is an option for individuals, and particularly for women, to take profit from the offers of societal modernisation. If measuring singles by the proportion of one-person households in relation to all private households, one has to consider that the increase which accentuated particularly since the early 1970s depends not least on the ageing of populations.

Since Belgium had relatively aged populations already in the early post-war period, the proportions of one-person households were in the 1950s and 1960s considerably higher (1947: 15.8%, 1961: 16.8%) compared to Switzerland (1950: 12.2, 1960: 14.2) and the Netherlands (1947: 9.2%, 1960: 11.9%). In recent times (1970 to 1990), the increase of singles was strongest in Switzerland, also because of the traditionally higher divorce rates. Analyses on the basis of the national FFS data show for Belgium significantly higher proportions of young people who quasi-simultaneously move from the parental household into a own partner-relation, while in Switzerland as well as in the Netherlands an increasing and prolonging intermediate life-stage can be found during which young adults live as singles. Various analyses support the hypothesis that particularly economic opportunity structures have an impact on the appearance of premarital singlehood. We assume that economic modernisation and the degree of urbanisation stimulate the propensity of living as singles. By contrast, one can hypothesise that a more traditional value system (proportion of Catholics) promote the pattern of quasi-simultaneity between leaving the parental home and partnership formation. Regarding the impact of family policy on the occurrence of (premarital) singlehood. Provisions which facilitate the conciliation of employment and family obligations motivate people to enter into a (marital or not) partner-relation. A generous family policy should therefore be correlated with lower proportions of one-person households.

*Childless couples:*

Voluntary childlessness can be seen, like singlehood, as a strategy of couples to take profit from the offers of a modernised society. Therefore, we assume that the increase in female labour force participation is leading not only to a postponement of procreation, but also to the renunciation of parenthood. We postulate furthermore that family policy provisions and particularly services should function as a significant counter-

force in this respect. As concerning the impact of societal cleavage structures on the proportions of childless couples, we assume that a traditional milieu (proportion of Catholics) is lowering the occurrence of this living arrangement, while the degree of urbanisation as well as the modernisation of a country's economy is promoting childlessness. However, one has also to bear in mind the sequencing pattern in family formation. A traditional pattern (as more frequently found in Belgium (FFS) is characterised by a relatively longer duration of the interval: age at marriage-age at first birth, while the typically modern pattern indicates a shorter interval. Frequently, the decision to give birth to a child is the motive of a cohabiting couple to marry (Fux/Baumgartner 1998). By consequence, one can assume that the more traditional sequence pattern leads to higher proportions of younger couples who not yet became parents.

If resuming the long-term figures, one can find for Belgium comparatively high proportions of childless couples during the entire post-war period (fluctuating between 35-40%). Both, in the Netherlands as well as in Switzerland, we find markedly lower proportions (about 20%) until about 1950 (NL) and 1960 (CH). Since then, childless couples are rapidly increasing in both countries with a more accentuated gradient for Switzerland. These findings are fully congruent with studies focussing on parity progression rates and the occurrence of childlessness in Europe (e.g. Prioux 1993).

*Lone-parent families:*

The proportion of lone-parents as a percentage of all private households differs markedly between the three countries under observation. Belgium is characterised by comparatively higher proportions of lone-parents during the post-war period (increasing from 7.2% in 1947 to 9.7% in 1991), secondly by a strong intra-national variation which continuously increased since 1950 and thirdly by a curvilinear development with lowest figures between 1960 and 1980. The Netherlands as well as Switzerland indicates lower

shares. Intra-national variation tends to converge in these countries. Despite the high divorce rates which is undoubtedly a relevant factor explaining the occurrence of lone-parent families, proportions remained at a level of about 5% in Switzerland since 1960. This may be influenced by relatively higher remarriage rates. In the Netherlands the share of lone-parent families in relation to all private households increased by nearly one third from 4.8% in 1960 to 6.6% in 1989. Similar to Belgium, we find a curvilinear trajectory also in the Netherlands. This let us assume two different patterns which were subsequently predominant: During the early post-war period, lone-parenthood was rather determined by widowhood and patterns in mortality, while the modern type of lone-parenthood is strongly influenced by the increase in divorce. As concerning the impact of family policy, we hypothesise that cash benefits are weakening the economic stress of mono-parental families. In other words: low subsidies stimulates lone-parents to move into new partner-relations while higher allowances enables lone-parents to cope with the unintended consequences (e.g. higher poverty risk).

*Larger households (with 5 and more persons):*

The decrease of larger households is reflecting the trend to reduce family size, therefore a focal aspect of family nuclearisation. Generally, all of the selected countries follow this trend indicating a rapid drop in the proportions which amounted around 1950 to between 25% and 30% towards about 6% to 8% around 1990. In all countries, we observe a continuous convergence. A particular trajectory is found for Belgium where the drop in family size commenced comparatively earlier, leading to comparatively stable proportions during the period 1950 to 1970 (figures around 15% to 16%). We assume that the comparatively early economic modernisation in junction with a strong urbanisation explains this fact. By contrast: although economic modernisation began in Switzerland early, too, this process was to a lower degree accompanied by an

increase in the urban population. And the Netherlands was a late-runner in the process of industrialisation though we can observe a forced urbanisation. Regarding the impact of family related policies we assume a positive covariation between the amount of family cash benefits and the propensity to give birth to children of higher parity.

We now try to embed the above-mentioned impact hypotheses into a broader theoretical context. We assume that effects are related to a) the *temporal organisation of the family cycle*, b) the process of *pluralisation of living-arrangements*, c) *female labour force participation*, and d) *procreative behaviour*. One can assume that a conservative family policy in junction with more traditional values hampers the modernisation of the temporal organisation of the family cycle. Leaving the parental household, forming a partnership and becoming a parent is normally succeeding one another. The role of women in this regime type is normally that of a homemaker. By consequence, young mothers more frequently drop out of the labour force, a fact which is certainly also influenced by the economic preconditions. As concerns the spread of new living forms, we assume a gravitation to marital arrangements. The increase of singles, and unmarried cohabitations are less accentuated. However, the proportions of lone-parents should be higher. Traditional values and a more marriage-oriented policy are both promoting strong kinship ties. Therefore the nuclearisation of the family commenced later, and extramarital fertility did not increase markedly.

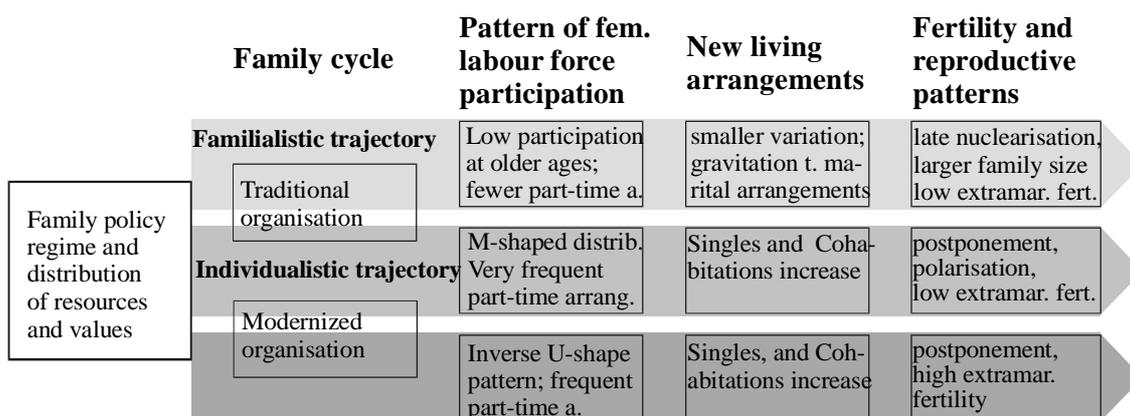
The *social-democratic* trajectory can be seen as the counterexample to the conservative regime. A rapid secularisation and a family policy enabling in particular women to choose among different behavioural options furthered a rapid modernisation of the family cycle. Prescriptions related with the sequencing of biographical events became weaker and women's lifelong participation in the labour force is the rule. One can ob-

serve therefore a greater variation in living arrangements. This regime-type allows couples also to get their children outside marriage. Therefore extramarital fertility is highest in these countries.

Also the *liberal* trajectory is characterised by a rapid modernisation. However, the state is defining family life much more as a private matter. In particular, a smaller amount of resources is devoted to reduce the 'costs' of modernisation. By consequence, one can observe in different fields a strong polarisation of behaviours. E.g. women more frequently remain childless for the sake of their career interests. They also more frequently drop out of the labour force for the duration of a baby-break (M-shaped distribution), or they choose part-time arrangements in order to reconcile both interests. As concerning the growth of new living-forms, we find particularly within younger age-groups a strong pluralisation similar to that in social-democratic countries. The decision to become parents, however, motivates couples frequently to move into a more traditional arrangement. By consequence, one can observe a subcutaneous change in the meaning of traditional institutions (e.g. marriage as a pragmatic decision). Due to these preconditions, it is not surprising that extramarital fertility is still comparatively low.

On this basis, we argue that the social-democratic family policy pattern is actively stimulating the process of societal modernisation by means of reducing or abolishing many of the thresholds and barriers families are confronted with. By contrast, the conservative policy regime aims at supporting families who follow more traditional paths. The particularity of the liberal regime may be seen in the absence of the state in family related matters. Couples are therefore obliged to self-organise their interests. The price is a more pronounced polarisation in individual behaviours in various fields. Figure 3 summarises these hypotheses.

**Figure 3: Summary of family policy impact hypotheses:**



#### 4. Major findings:

The following results derive from regression analyses for 1950, 1970 and 1990. Dependent variables were the above-mentioned living arrangements, while the following variables were taken as explanatory factors: (i) generosity of the *family policy system* (amount of family cash benefits), (ii) the *religious cleavage* (proportion of Catholics), (iii) the population's *age-structure* (dependency ratio:  $65+/15-64$ )\*100), (iv) *economic growth* (growth rate of regional GDP/c), (v) *female labour market integration* (female labour force as a proportion of the economically active population), (vi) *economic modernisation* (proportions of employed in the second and third sector), and finally, (vii) the *rural-urban cleavage* (proportions of urbanised regions, communities with over 10'000 inhabitants). Results are documented in a condensed form in table 1.

Regarding the *occurrence of singles* one has to note that the ageing process is the predominant explanatory factor. The regression analyses indicate two additional determinants: economic modernisation leads already in the early post-war period (1950) to an increase in the proportion of one-person households. With the begin of the second demographic transition, (1970) we find a strong impact of urbanisation on the proportions of singles, while in recent times the impact of female labour force integration has accentuated. Furthermore, the generosity of a region's family policy is significantly

lowering the occurrence of singles. This effect is measurable since 1970.

With regard to the appearance of *couples without children*, we have to note that population's ageing (via increasing life expectancy) is of increasing relevance across period. If childlessness was under-represented in rural regions, this factor is losing its relevance. The same holds true for the dimension of economic modernisation which became weaker across periods. On the other side, we observe a structural change insofar, as in former periods (1950) female employment led to a reduction in the share of childless couples (predominance of the homemaker-breadwinner model). In recent times, there is a significantly positive and since 1970 even increasing impact of female labour force participation on the proportions of childless couples to observe. For 1990 we furthermore found a strong negative effect of family cash benefits on childlessness.

**Table 1: Significant factors for each living arrangement across time**

Living arrangement	1950	1970	1990
<b>Singles</b>	age structure (+) economic modernis. (+)  $R^2 = .65$	age structure (+) family policy (-) economic modernis. (+) urbanisation (+) $R^2 = .63$	age structure (+) family policy (-) economic modernis. (+) female labour force (+) $R^2 = .63$
<b>Childless Couples</b>	urbanisation (+) economic modernis. (+) age structure (+) female labour force (-) $R^2 = .71$	age structure (+) economic modernis. (+) female labour force (+) urbanisation (+) $R^2 = .87$	age structure (+) family policy (-) female labour force (+) economic modernis. (+) $R^2 = .81$
<b>Larger households</b>	age structure (-) economic modernis. (-) urbanisation (-) family policy (-) $R^2 = .79$	economic modernis. (-) religious cleavage (+) female labour force (-) age structure (-) $R^2 = .78$	economic modernis. (-) family policy (+) age structure (-) $R^2 = .82$
<b>Lone parent families</b>	religious cleavage (+) age structure (+) female labour force (-) economic growth (+) $R^2 = .94$	religious cleavage (+) family policy (+) $R^2 = .57$	family policy (+) urbanisation (+) economic modernis. (+) $R^2 = .77$

Note: All significant effects are mentioned in their rank order.

Since the occurrence of *larger (5+persons) households* was determined in the early post-war period by the syndrome of rurality and a lacking economic modernisation, we again find a structural change in the explanatory factors. Around 1970, par-

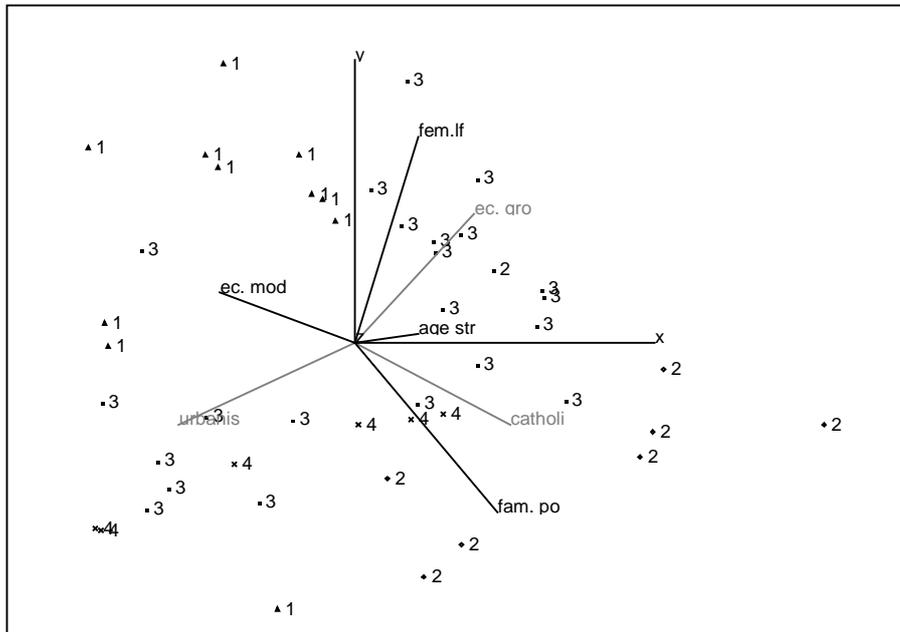
ticularly female labour force integration is functioning as a determinant which led to a decrease in the proportion of large households, contrasted to the Catholic milieu which was promoting this living-form. In recent times, the impact of structural modernisation seems to become saturated. By consequence, the corresponding factors are weaker. In contrast to this, we have to mention that family cash benefits are stimulating in recent times the occurrence of large households. Across the entire period, again, the process of ageing is lowering the proportion of households with 5 and more persons.

As concerning the determinants explaining the variations in the occurrence of *lone-parents*, we observe in 1950 and 1970 a strong impact of the Catholic milieu and the age structure of the population. We assume, this finding is reflecting the fact that lone-parenthood was in the early post-war period rather a living-form of widows, than a ‘modern’ living arrangement. The negative covariation with female labour force participation and the positive association with economic growth are supporting this assumption. In recent times, the occurrence of lone-parents are, by contrast, much more determined by economic modernisation and urbanisation. As expected, the generosity of a country’s family policy is promoting the spread of lone-parenthood.

For the following analysis which is summarising the major findings, we grouped for each of the 47 research units (provinces, cantons) the distributions of different living arrangements into four distinct types: A first type of regions (provinces, cantons) is characterised by a strong over-representation of *living arrangements without children* [1], (childless couples and singles). The frequent occurrence of *living forms with children* [2], (larger households, single parents) indicates its counterpart. Those units where all of the selected living arrangements are on the average perform a third type [3] that is contrasting with regions indicating a predominance of *joint living arrangements* [4], (i.e. low proportion of singles). Elsewhere, we defined the two dimensions lying behind

these distinct types as presence vs. absence of a family sector, or presence vs. absence of a marriage sector respectively (Dorbritz/Fux 1997).

**Figure 4: Biplot of variables influencing the configuration of living arrangements**



**Notes:**

- |          |                        |          |                          |
|----------|------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| fem. lf: | female labour force    | ec.gro:  | economic growth          |
| age str: | age structure          | catholi: | proportions of Catholics |
| fam. po: | family policy          | urbanis: | urbanisation             |
| ec. mod  | economic modernisation |          |                          |

- 1 High share of household types without children (childless couples and singles)
- 2 High share of household types with children (large households, single parent)
- 3 Different types of households on an average
- 4 Low share of singles, joint living-forms preferred

By applying principal component analysis and the biplot technique, we measured the structure of associations between these four types of regions on the one hand, and the above-mentioned analytical dimensions.

The biplot technique (Gabriel 1971) allows to visualise in one single graph both, the associations between variables as well as the spread of the four types. Biplots are approximating multidimensional distance configurations between points in a two or three dimensional subspace.

We first discuss the configuration between variables. The closer the angle be-

tween two variable vectors, the higher they are positively correlated. We have to note a positive association between family cash benefits expenditure and the proportion of Catholics. However, family cash benefits and urbanisation or the age-structure of the population respectively, are statistically independent. Furthermore, the expected slight negative correlation between the generosity of the family policy and the regional economy (female employment, growth of the regional GDP) is supported, as well as the positive association between female labour force participation and a region's economic capacity. Economic modernisation is associated with the degree of urbanisation, but independent from the performance of a region's economy.

As concerning the impact of these dimensions on the distribution of living arrangements, it is worth while to mention that particularly the generosity of family cash benefits and female labour force participation rates are separating regions with a over- vs. under-representation of living arrangements with children most strongly. Provinces with an under-representation of the family sector (high proportions of singles and families without children) are positively associated with economic modernisation as well as with female labour force participation. By contrast, the over-representation of living arrangements with children is positively associated with a generous family policy and is strongly linked with Catholicism. The syndrome: Catholicism, traditionalism, and a high propensity to live in a family with children performs insofar the counterpart of economic modernisation. Furthermore, a low share of singles (over-representation of joint living-arrangements) is negatively associated with ageing as well as with economic growth.

## **5. Concluding remarks:**

Our findings led us to the following conclusions: The configuration of living arrangements is interdependently related with a) demographic preconditions, (particularly

the age-structure of populations), b) the economic conditions, c) the cleavage structures, as well as d) the family policy offers. Regarding the impact of family policies, we observe an increasing explanatory power of welfare provisions. Policies strengthening a more traditional configuration of living arrangements as well as policies which widen the paths for a modernisation of living forms let observe marked effects. On the other hand, the 'absence' of the state in the field of family related policies is aggravating the everyday life situation of individuals and couples. Even there is evidence that family policy has impact on the spread and distribution of living arrangements, one should bear in mind that the structure of determinants changed across time. On the basis of our analyses finally, it seems not possible to decide whether a country's particularities in social change is motivating a certain policy or whether a certain policy is en- or discouraging the spread of living arrangements. We prefer to speak of an interdependent bargaining between both processes.

## References:

- Becker, G. S. (1981), *A Treatise on the Family*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.).
- Blanchet, D. and Ekert-Jaffé, O. (1988) *The demographic impact of family benefits: evidence from a micro-model and from macro-data*. Paper presented at the IUSSP seminar on the family, the market and the state in ageing societies, Japan.
- Bonoli, G. (1997), Classifying Welfare States: a Two-dimension approach, *Journal of Social Policy*, Vol. 26, 3, p. 351-372.
- de Bruijn, B. (1992), *The Concept of Rationality in Social Sciences*, PDOD-Paper, no. 9, Groningen.
- Caldwell, J.C. (1982), *Theory of Fertility Decline*, Academic Press, London.
- Cliquet R.L. et al. (1992) *The 1991 Fertility and Family Survey in Flanders (NEGO V)*, Framework and Questionnaire, CBGS Werkdocumenten Nr. 82, Brussels.
- Coleman, J. S. (1990), *Foundations of Social Theory*, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge (Mass.).
- Ekert, O. (1986), Effects et limites des aides financières aux familles: une expériences et une modèle, in: *Population*, Vol. 41, 2, p. 327-248.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990), *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*, Polity Press, Oxford.
- Friedman, D., Hechter, M. and Kanazawa, S. (1994), *A theory of the value of children*. Paper presented at the IUSSP seminar on Values and Fertility change, Sion.
- Fux, B. (1994), *Der familienpolitische Diskurs. Eine theoretische und empirische Untersuchung über das Zusammenwirken und den Wandel von Familienpolitik, Fertilität und Familie*, Sozialpolitische Schriften, Heft 64, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin.
- Fux, B. and Baumgartner, A.D. (1998), *Wandel von familialen Lebensformen - Lebensverläufe, Lebensentwürfe*, (report on the basis of the Swiss FFS), Zürich 1998
- Fux, B. (1999), *Which models of the family are en- or discouraged by different family policies?* In: Kaufmann, F.-X. *Family Life and Family Policy in Europe*, Vol. 2, Clarendon Press, Oxford, (in print).
- Gabadinho, A. and Wanner, Ph. (1999), *Family and Fertility Surveys in countries of the ECE Region*, Standard Country Report: Switzerland, United Nations, New York and Geneva.
- Gabriel, K.R. (1971), The biplot, *Biometrika*, Vol. 58, p. 453-467.
- Gauthier, A. H. (1991), *Family Policy in Comparative Perspective*. Discussion paper no. 5, Oxford: Centre for European Studies, Nuffield College.
- Gauthier, A. H. (1993), *Families and welfare benefits: the measured and unmeasured effects*. PDOD-Paper, no. 17, Amsterdam.
- Höhn, Ch. and Schubnell, H. (1986), Bevölkerungspolitische Maßnahmen und ihre Wirksamkeit in ausgewählten europäischen Industrienationen (I), *Zeitschrift für Bevölkerungsforschung*, Vol. 12, 3-51.
- Huber, E. and Stephens J. D. (1992), *Economic internationalisation, the European Community, and the Social Democratic Welfare State*. Paper presented at the meeting of the American Political Association, Chicago.
- Kaufmann, F.-X. et al. (1992), *Wirkungen politischen Handelns auf den Bevölkerungsprozess. Ansätze für methodische Analysen*, Boppard.
- Kaufmann, F.-X. et al. (1988), *Partnerbeziehungen und Familienentwicklung in Nordrhein-Westfalen. Generatives Verhalten im sozialen und regionalen Kontext*, Düsseldorf.
- Kaufmann, F.-X. and Herlth, A. (1982), *Elemente einer soziologischen Theorie sozialpolitischer Intervention*, in: Kaufmann, F.-X (ed.): *Staatliche Sozialpolitik und Familie*, München, Wien 1982, 49-86.
- Korpi, W. and Palme, J. (1998), The Paradox of Redistribution and Strategies of Equality: Welfare State institutions, Inequality, and Poverty in the Western Countries, *ASR*, Vol. 63, p. 661-687.
- Latten, J. and de Graaf (1997) *Family and Fertility Surveys in countries of the ECE Region, Standard Country Report: The Netherlands*, United Nations, New York and Geneva.
- Lodewijckx, E. (1999) *Family and Fertility Surveys in countries of the ECE Region, Standard Country Report: Belgium*, United Nations, New York and Geneva.
- Prioux, F. (1993) *L'infécondité en Europe* in: Blum, A. and Rallu, J.-L.: *European population. II. Demographic dynamics*, Edition John Libbey, Paris, p 231-254.
- Therborn, G. (1985), *Arbeitslosigkeit, Strategien und Politikansätze in den OECD-Ländern*, VSA, Hamburg.
- Titmuss, (1974), *Social Policy. An Introduction*, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., London.

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the Dutch FFS data-set is still unavailable for researcher, so that we only could refer to published information. Furthermore, the Belgium FFS covers only Flanders and the region of Brussels, a fact which is limiting regional analyses.